

**Town of Belmont  
Capital Budget Committee  
Beech Street Center, Conference Room, Second Floor  
Thursday Evening, April 15, 2010, 7:00 p.m.**

Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members of the Committee present were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, John Conte, Jennifer Fallon, Ralph Jones, Anne Marie Mahoney and Rebecca Vose. Also present were Thomas Younger, Town Administrator; and Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and staff liaison to the Committee. Three representatives of the Minuteman Career and Technical High School were also present. They were Dr. Edward A. Bouquillon, Superintendent-Director, Camie Lamica, Director of Business and Operation, and Joseph Scali, member of Minuteman School Committee representing Belmont. The representatives of Minuteman left the meeting after the first item on the agenda.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary, to which was attached draft of minutes of meeting 3/4/2010.
2. Prior to the meeting, each member of this Committee had received a copy of a letter dated April 12, 2010, to Mr. Alan Tosti, Chairman of the Arlington Finance Committee, from Dr. Bouquillon addressing some of the issues that Mr. Tosti had raised during a meeting regarding the proposed Feasibility Study authorized and sought by the Minuteman School Committee.
3. Dr. Bouquillon distributed one additional item in connection with his presentation on behalf of the Minuteman Career and Technical High School. It is a set (28 pages) of PowerPoint slides identified as "Invitation to Feasibility by the MSBA -- FY11 Operating Budget Trends."
4. Ms Hagg distributed two items. One is a summary of the amounts that were appropriated for capital projects in prior years. The summary indicates whether each amount is appropriate for reversion and reappropriation, based upon discussions at prior meetings of this Committee. The other item that Ms. Hagg made available to members of the Committee is a worksheet showing the capital budget requests for fiscal year 2010, the priority assigned to each request by each requesting department, the amount requested, the Town Administrator's priority (non-School items) and space for a preliminary indication of the attitude of each member of this Committee toward to each request (the chart indicates "FY09" in the caption but clearly refers to the April 15, 2010 meeting in the lower right-hand corner).

**Review of Minuteman Request (Article 15 on Warrant)**  
*(Item 2 on Agenda)*

Mrs. Brusch immediately called upon Dr. Bouquillon to make a presentation on behalf of Minuteman. Dr. Bouquillon explained that the currently requested feasibility study would lead to a possible upgrade of the existing building or a new building for Minuteman. Minuteman had undertaken a review of the building which had identified \$8,000 of ESCO projects, \$5,000 of which could be undertaken without waste if the building were later upgraded. The energy projects were paid for through energy savings and not appropriations from communities that are members of the Minuteman district.

The request under Article 15 is for authorization by communities that are members of the Minuteman district to borrow \$725,000 for a feasibility study. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) would reimburse 40% of this amount. Dr. Bouquillon led the Committee through the background for this request by reference to the PowerPoint slides he had distributed. The second page of that set of slides contains a project process flow chart. Dr. Bouquillon indicated on the chart the step which he is asking the Town Meeting to take. (See red circle in upper right-hand corner of chart.) Just below this red circle is a box that refers to a project that is concurrent with, but not part of, the proposed feasibility study. That concurrent project is a task force that had been charged with examining and making recommendations concerning the district agreement whereby 16 towns are existing members of the Minuteman district. Belmont does not have a resident representing the Town on this task force, but has been told it can appoint one. Currently, Henry Hall is on that task force but he has moved to Lexington and is no longer a Belmont resident. The existing district agreement has not been amended since 1988.

Dr. Bouquillon recognizes that changes in the district agreement are likely and without some change to the district agreement the loan might be a problem, but any project that results from the feasibility study will not be presented to the member towns for at least two more years.

Dr. Bouquillon continued with his description of the background to the request to authorize a borrowing to fund the feasibility study. The MSBA, this past June, set aside \$100,000 to fund building and repairs for all regional technical schools. There is a lack of capacity in most regional technical high schools and they have long waiting lists for admission. In contrast, about one-third of Minuteman's enrollment is from out-of-district towns and still Minuteman has capacity. Katherine Craven, Executive Director of MSBA, has discussed the possibility of 100% reimbursement for the cost of extra seats at Minuteman in addition to those needed for the 16 member communities. There are currently inequities in the district agreement which become obvious in the disparity of the number of students being sent from each member town. Meanwhile, Minuteman is considering a number of models for its operation. One would involve morning classes only for vocational subjects with students returning to their home communities in the afternoon for academic studies. The cost of the proposed feasibility study to Belmont

would be approximately \$39,000 over the life of the bond that is proposed to fund the study.

Mr. Clark inquired why funding for a feasibility study for the Minuteman School is being proposed now. In response, Dr. Bouquillon pointed out that the current building has not been upgraded for many years other than the ESCO project. Partial compliance with the Americans With A Disability Act (ADA) has been undertaken but full compliance remains to be addressed. Shop areas are substandard, and some programs have no natural light or outside access. There are many program issues. Additional programs would be useful in this district. The roof needs replacement. The building was originally opened in 1970.

Ms. Fallon noted that the current Minuteman building is about the same age as the Belmont High School. She pointed out that the Belmont High School Building needs some work and that the financial ability of Belmont might be severely strained. Indeed, nine of the communities that are members of the Minuteman district have MSBA projects currently in process. Dr. Bouquillon observed that this situation might result in higher reimbursement from MSBA because of the burden that an additional project would place on those communities.

Mr. Clark observed that the projected total system-wide cost of the proposed Minuteman's feasibility study is greatly in excess of what he would expect based on Belmont's experience. Mrs. Bruschi explained that the MSBA definition of "feasibility study" is actually a process that goes through the schematic design phase. Although the Belmont High School feasibility study cost only \$40,000, it was not a comparable project because it did not include procurement of a schematic design. Mrs. Bruschi did state that the Owner's Project Manager ("OPM") estimate being proposed by Minuteman in the distributed materials is very much too low to meet the new requirement for OPM services on each MSBA project.

Mr. Jones indicated that the process represented by the district agreement task force is the most important project since the 16 member communities of the district now only send 450 students to Minuteman, which is much lower than the capacity of the school. In response, Dr. Bouquillon reported that there are three other communities that together send half of the non-district students to the school. He agreed that MSBA may force those towns to join the district. Furthermore, the Minuteman School Committee has agreed to increase the cost per student for non-member communities to \$2,100 per year for a non-special need student.

Mr. Jones iterated that he would be more comfortable if there were a renegotiation of the Minuteman membership agreement before a feasibility study that includes a schematic design is undertaken. He pointed out that the MSBA may seek a different school than the 16 members of the current district would want. Dr. Bouquillon agreed that he does not feel that a project can go forward without a change to the district agreement.

Mrs. Brusch pointed out that Belmont has financial issues, including cuts to school staffing, reduced public safety and that, in particular, the Belmont High School Building has crucial maintenance needs. She explained that the appropriate enrollment projections for Minuteman must be determined before a feasibility study is undertaken. Dr. Bouquillon agreed with that observation. There are currently for the 2010-2011 school year 318 non-post graduate students that have applied for full admittance. The current year enrollment, however, is 700 and Dr. Bouquillon expects greater growth in enrollment in the fall. The MSBA may pay for a higher percentage of building costs but the operating costs are born by member communities in perpetuity.

Ms. Vose stated that Belmont does not send sufficient numbers of students to Minuteman to justify the cost of tuition that is imposed by Minuteman. Mr. Clark observed that once the number of member communities of Minuteman is increased, the circle (or stalemate) will be broken. Mr. Jones agreed. Mr. Clark said he would like to see the enrollment study first and then address the feasibility study. Dr. Bouquillon objected that repair of the roof is an immediate need. Ms. Fallon agreed but pointed out that an entire feasibility study is not needed to address the roof. Dr. Bouquillon feels that the feasibility study will answer many of the complex issues that he faces and that the process is needed because he has less administrative staff (17 down to 6) then he used to have and, as a result, is unable to do the work of a feasibility study in-house.

Mrs. Brusch suggested that a study of future enrollment would be an appropriate start for all the issues on the table. Mr. Clark suggested that the feasibility study be broken up into three parts: the enrollment study; then the district agreement renegotiation; then the remaining portion of the feasibility study.

Dr. Bouquillon expects to meet with Katherine Craven, Executive Director of MSBA on April 27. At that time, he will ask if an agreement can be worked out to address the enrollment issues in the first eight months of the feasibility study. He will report back on Tuesday (April 27) afternoon. This will be presented to the Town Meeting at the Wednesday session, April 28. Dr. Bouquillon agreed to call in advance. Mr. Clark clarified to Dr. Bouquillon that if this Committee does not have an appropriate agreement before Town Meeting then this Committee will recommend against the pending article. A meeting of this Committee can be set up an hour before the Town Meeting session if necessary (the Warrant Committee would be included in that meeting).

### **Updates on Pending Matters** *(Item 3 on Agenda)*

Dr. Bouquillon and the other Minuteman representatives withdrew from the meeting and the Capital Budget Committee turned to a review of pending matters. The amount under the “available revenue budget” allocated to this Committee remains at \$2.3M M for FY2011, the same figure as currently allocated under the “needs budget.” The Town Administrator, however, reserves the right to change the allocation to this Committee for capital items under the “available funds budget” as he works on establishment the “available funds budget.” The request for the stained glass window

project at the Town Hall is now \$75,000. The trash collection at the Beech Street Center will be treated as a matter of operating costs and is no longer a concern for this Committee. (There remain issues regarding Beech Street Center trash which are scheduled next for a hearing at the Planning Board.) The Belmont Municipal Light Department will inspect the lights at the softball field the next week and the price for dealing with those lights will probably be less than the minimum required for consideration by this Committee.

New prices have been obtained for Department of Public Works radios and the cost of sewer work is reported on the budget sheets that have been supplied. Robert Martin reports that the so-called "JV field" fence is to be included in the fence work proposed by the School Department.

The Committee had a long discussion of suggestions that might be funded through an override. Glenn Clancy has reported that the Town could make use of another \$500,000 added annually to the Pavement Management budget without exceeding the Town's current planning and supervisory capacity, nor its ability to accommodate street closure.

The Capital Budget Committee has also suggested that one possible component of an override might be a one-time expenditure pertaining to major maintenance. Such a proposal might require some change in Town by-laws if use of the money were to be isolated and subject to the recommendations of this Committee. Major maintenance could include sidewalks, carpeting, painting, or computers. Mr. Jones observed that any override proposal that would result in double digit increases in taxes would be difficult in these economic circumstances. Mr. Younger pointed out that any proposal to allocate funds to sidewalks would have to be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen for consistency with its policy on pavement management.

Ms. Hagg pointed out that she had provided a listing of \$30,185.58 worth of reversions ready for reappropriation. This does not include the transfer of \$85,000 (or more) originally appropriated to the School Department for installation of a security system at the former Wellington building. Dr. Missal, the business manager of the School Department, has expressed concern about the cost of the current security projects and is not prepared to endorse any reversion of security project funds.

Mr. Jones reported that the issue of a vehicle policy for the Town is an on-going one for which he has some ideas, particularly regarding fleet maintenance.

### **Preliminary Review of FY2010 Requests** *(Item 5 on Agenda)*

The Committee next turned to a preliminary review of the expenditures that had been requested for the FY2010 capital budget. This consisted of a polling of each member of the Committee with respect to each item requested. Mrs. Bruschi announced each item of request in the order listed on the tally sheet provided by Ms. Hagg and then

called upon each member of the Committee, in the order listed in Ms. Hagg's tally sheet, to state his or her attitude toward that request. During the discussion of these items, Mr. Clark proposed that the univent replacement project sought by the School Department not be broken into phases for funding but instead be bonded as a comprehensive project, the money for which need not be spent in a lump sum but may be phased. He made the observation that it may be better to arrange the procurement as a single project with only the installation to be phased. Mr. Younger indicated that he thought that the request for a security system at the Chenery Middle School should be further evaluated before an appropriation is made.

At the conclusion of the preliminary discussion, 20 requests (including the Pavement Management request) had received support from a majority of the Committee for a total of \$2,355,737 (or \$2,065,739 if the Chenery Middle School request is omitted) in requests (including \$1,104,207 for Pavement Management). By consensus, the members of the Committee agreed that the amount allocated to the building envelope request by the School Department could be adjusted to make the amount recommended equal the amount available.

**Preliminary Discussion of Report To Town Meeting**  
*(Item 6 on Agenda)*

Mrs. Brusch reminded the Committee that Ms. Vose had agreed to take over the drafting of the Committee's report to Town Meeting when Mr. Clark leaves the country. Ms. Vose, Mr. Clark and Mrs. Brusch will meet at the Beech Street Center on Thursday evening, April 29, to review the existing draft report and arrange for the transfer of responsibility. The final report must be submitted to the Town for mailing no later than Tuesday, May 11.

**Action on Minutes of March 4, 2010, Meeting**  
*(Item 7 on Agenda)*

Mrs. Brusch called attention to the fact that a draft of minutes for the meeting of March 4, 2010, was attached to the agenda and she called for any corrections. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Mr. Conte urged that the Town consider leasing programs of the large equipment items that appear on the five-year projection of capital expenditures.

**Consideration of Schedule**  
*(Item 8 on Agenda)*

The Committee discussed the need for a meeting to learn and act upon any information that Dr. Bouquillon is able to produce before the next session of Town Meeting concerning Article 15 (Minuteman) on the Warrant. A meeting of this Committee has already been posted for May 6, 2010. By consensus it was agreed that a

joint meeting of this Committee and the Warrant Committee should be posted for 6:30 p.m. before the session of Town Meeting on Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

**Review of Other Articles on Warrant (8 & 12)**

*(Item 4 on Agenda)*

Before turning to the other article on the Warrant (8 & 12) calling for this Committee's recommendations, the Committee returned to Article 15 (Minuteman) for a formal vote. Mr. Jones and Ms. Fallon indicated that they believed that this Committee should recommend unfavorable action with respect to Article 15 on the Warrant. Mr. Clark said that he would favor favorable action only if the feasibility study could be broken into three phases: first an enrollment study; second a consideration of the district agreement by the task force and the member towns; and third completion of a feasibility study in the light of decisions made by the member towns in the second step. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend unfavorable action with respect to the motion made under Article 15 on the Warrant.

The Committee then discussed Articles 8 & 12 on the Warrant. Article 8 appropriates up-front money for chapter 90 expenditures for Pavement Management. The motion under Article 12 rescinds unused bonding authority with respect to the financing of the High School HVAC units. Upon motions duly made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend favorably action on both articles.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark